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CONFIDENTIAL

(18877)

FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING

THE LEBANON

PART 6

January to December 1952

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FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE RESPECTING
THE LEBANON—PART 6

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

E 1122/1

No. 1

CONGRESS OF ARAB CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE, INDUSTRY
AND AGRICULTURE

Egyptian Resolution calling for boycott of British Products in Arab countries

Mr. Chapman-Andrews to Mr. Eden. (Received 10th January)

(No. 139E. Confidential) *Beirut,*
Sir, *31st December, 1951.*

I have the honour to report that a Congress of Arab Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, was held under the patronage of the President of the Lebanese Republic from 17th to 21st December in Beirut and on 22nd December in Tripoli. Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt and Saudi Arabia were all represented. At the conclusion of the congress an account of the proceedings was issued to the press, a copy of which I enclose.

2. Word had reached us some time beforehand that the Egyptian delegation meant to table a resolution calling for the boycott of British products in all Arab countries, and we were thus enabled to prepare our friends for what was coming. Rather surprisingly, few of them seem to have foreseen anything of the sort, the President of the Republic even saying that, had he had any inkling of it, he would not have allowed the congress to be held here. I was given to understand that, as it was, the Lebanese Government would disavow the congress if it passed a resolution directed against the United Kingdom. They did in fact make some attempt to ensure that the proceedings should be as innocuous as possible. Instead of attending the inaugural session of the congress, which as its patron he would normally have done, the President sent the Prime Minister to represent him; and M. Philippe Tacla, the Minister of Finance and National Economy, insisted on seeing drafts of all the opening speeches, thus assuring himself that they contained nothing objectionable. An Egyptian delegate, M. Ali Shukri Khamiss, president of the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, was one of the last to speak. As he rose M. Tacla saw him take some additional sheets of

paper from his pocket. This led him to suspect that the speech which was about to be delivered was not the one which had been approved in draft. He at once warned the Prime Minister who thereupon left the meeting. Thus the President was not represented whilst the Egyptian made his speech which turned out to be an extremely violent attack on the British.

3. The main interest of the proceedings of the following days centred round the boycott resolution. The Saudi Arabians displayed little interest in it; the Iraq and Jordan delegates opposed it on the ground that their close economic ties with the United Kingdom debarred them from enforcing a boycott; but the most effective speech came from a Syrian, M. Zaim, of the Aleppo Chamber of Commerce, who pointed out that both his country and the Lebanon owed their independence largely to the British, that it did not make sense to antagonise a country which was contributing heavily towards the support of Arab refugees and that, as France and America had supported the British action in Egypt, the boycott if imposed at all should be applied to French and American as well as to British goods. Eventually a resolution in much milder terms was in fact adopted. The Iraqi and Jordan delegations, though they voted in favour, made it clear at the time that there could be no question of their carrying the resolution into effect. Some Lebanese delegates abstained from voting and the Lebanese Government intend to ignore it. Abdel-Rahman Bey Sahmarani, president of the Beirut Chamber of Commerce and Industry and chairman of the congress, supported the resolution though he afterwards told my commercial secretary that he disagreed with it in principle and only voted for it to avoid causing a major

split in the congress. He is an ambitious man and a Moslem and, though he represents some British exporters, he is clearly more interested in consolidating the leading position which he has made for himself in the Federation of Arab Chambers of Commerce.

4. I must say that I was disappointed by the failure of our friends (among them Jamal Bey Tukan, the Minister of Jordan, who declared beforehand that his country's delegation would withdraw from the congress rather than be a party to any boycott resolution) to put up a more effective resistance to the Egyptian demands. On the other hand the Egyptians themselves

cannot have derived much satisfaction from the congress. It is true that they got a resolution passed more or less on the lines that they wanted; but they must have been disagreeably surprised at the general lack of enthusiasm for a boycott (even, I am informed, among some of their own members), and they must have realised that their Arab colleagues, though they dared not vote against it, have not the slightest intention of carrying it into effect.

5. I am sending copies of this despatch to His Majesty's Representatives at Cairo, Bagdad, Damaseus, Amman and Jedda.

I have, &c.

E. A. CHAPMAN-ANDREWS.

Enclosure in No. 1

LES RESOLUTIONS DEFINITIVES ADOPTEES PAR LE CONGRES DES CHAMBRES DE COMMERCE ARABES

Le prochain Congrès se tiendra dans 6 mois en Syrie

Après la visite rendue aux principales industries du pays, les membres du Congrès des Chambres de Commerce ont tenu leur dernière réunion samedi dernier à Tripoli. Dans cette séance, les congressistes ont adopté les résolutions suivantes:

- (1) Réduire les barrières douanières entre les Etats arabes en vue de les abroger totalement dans l'avenir.
- (2) Abroger les passeports.
- (3) Faciliter le déplacement des personnes et des biens.
- (4) Accorder la priorité aux produits locaux et établir des statistiques sur la production nationale de chaque pays arabe.
- (5) Créer des sociétés nationales et interdire aux capitalistes étrangers d'y participer.
- (6) Lutter contre l'infiltration dans les marchés arabes des produits de luxe étrangers et encourager la consommation des produits arabes.
- (7) Préparer la création d'une banque arabe commune à tous les Etats membres de la Ligue et étudier la possibilité de faire entrer le Maroc dans un système de coopération économique arabe.
- (8) Demander à la Commission spécialisée de la Ligue d'établir un projet d'unification des monnaies arabes.
- (9) Demander aux gouvernements d'interdire l'admission de produits

étrangers lorsque des produits identiques sont fabriqués par des nationaux.

- (10) Demander aux Chambres de Commerce et aux gouvernements arabes de boycotter l'économie britannique ainsi que toute économie étrangère dont l'activité porte atteinte à l'économie nationale arabe.
- (11) Demander à la Ligue d'élaborer un projet de création d'une banque arabe agricole.
- (12) Demander aux gouvernements d'encourager les industries nationales, de les développer et de les protéger contre la concurrence étrangère.

Le Congrès a, en outre, examiné deux questions:

- (1) Les répercussions des accords du "Point IV" sur l'économie arabe.
Ce problème, n'ayant pu faire l'objet d'une étude complète, sera inscrit à l'ordre du jour du prochain congrès.
- (2) Les relations libano-syriennes.

Les présidents des diverses délégations ont décidé d'intervenir personnellement auprès des autorités libanaises et syriennes en vue de faire aboutir les négociations en cours entre Damas et Beyrouth.

Le prochain congrès se tiendra dans 6 mois, en Syrie, soit à Damas, soit à Alep.

EL 1015/10

No. 2

LEBANESE POLITICAL SITUATION

Mr. Chapman-Andrews to Mr. Eden. (Received 11th February)

(No. 92)

Beirut,

(Telegraphic) 11th February, 1952.

My telegram No. 87.

After two days of consultations and rumours Sami Solh has been called upon to form a government. Names of the new Ministers will be reported when known.

EL 1011/1

No. 3

LEBANON: ANNUAL REVIEW FOR 1951

Mr. Chapman-Andrews to Mr. Eden. (Received 22nd February)

(No. 45. Confidential) Beirut,
Sir, 19th February, 1952.

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith my Annual report on the Lebanon for 1951. I am almost entirely indebted to Mr. R. W. Bailey, Head of Chancery at this post until a few weeks ago, for its compilation.

I have, &c.

E. A. CHAPMAN-ANDREWS.

Enclosure in No. 3

Annual Report on the Lebanon for 1951

1951 has in many ways been a turning point in the history of the Lebanon as an independent country. There are glimmerings of a new sense of responsibility in the conduct of public affairs and a growing realisation that independence not only carries privileges but demands standards of public service as well. The 1951 elections, although hardly a model of probity if compared with our own, were nevertheless conducted with the moral plane in view and with a greater measure of honesty than was the case in 1947. At the same time less has been heard of the financial scandals in the ruling circle and the Government even made a determined attempt to uproot and destroy the hashish crop and abolish public gambling, both of which had provided the basic source of income of a number of highly placed individuals.

2. There remains however the fundamental problem of a country more or less evenly divided between two major religions, Christian and Moslem, with each of these

again divided into numerous sects. The whole of the national life of the Lebanon has been built up on a delicate adjustment of appointments to satisfy the demands of each of the communities in relation to their numbers. There is moreover a fundamental difference of outlook between these two communities: the Christians tending to look westward to Europe and America, and the Moslems to the Arab and Islamic world. The President of the Republic, Sheikh Bechara el Khoury, has gathered to himself the essential reins of the Government and succeeded in balancing the claims of the two conflicting groups by steering a non-controversial and often slightly tortuous course. His success in this and his ability to make all men beholden to him has made him the paramount political figure in the country.

3. With a general election due, in accordance with the Constitution, in April 1951, there was considerable agitation in the country for a neutral Government which would enable the electorate to express its wishes openly and without the bribery and intimidation which befouled the elections of 1947. How far this campaign was inspired by the President is open to speculation, but it certainly suited his book, as he had for some time been anxious to rid himself of Riad Bey Solh, who had been Prime Minister almost continuously since the Declaration of Lebanese Independence. He had not proved sufficiently tractable for the President, and still less so for the President's younger brother, Sheikh Selim el Khoury, the *Eminence Grise* of the Lebanon and popularly known as the "Sultan." The President's decision to appoint a neutral

Government could not be resisted by the Prime Minister in the face of public opinion and he thereupon resigned on 13th February. He and his Government were succeeded by a triumvirate consisting of Hussein Bey el Aloueini, the former Minister of Finance, who announced his intention of not seeking re-election, Boulos Bey Fayad, a business man, and Edward Bey Noon, a lawyer. Neither of the latter had had previous political experience. The Prime Minister took to himself the portfolios of the Interior, Foreign Affairs, Finance and National Defence, and the other two divided the remaining eight portfolios between them. The result of this startling reduction in the size of the Cabinet led to some diminution in the ability of Government departments to take prompt high level decisions, but the three Ministers made up for their lack of numbers by a degree of enthusiasm for the public weal as distinct from private gain which had been lacking before. As their appointment was not due to a corrupt electorate, they were able to withhold favours which they did not deem it in the public interest to give, without in any way risking their own political future.

4. All the various candidates were allowed to campaign freely, though in Mount Lebanon the sinister influence of Sheikh Selim, who has considerable support in the gendarmerie, was claimed by Kamal Bey Jumblatt, the Druze leader of the Progressive Socialist Party, to have been responsible for a clash between the villagers and the security forces at Barouk in the course of which eight persons were killed and a number injured. Apart from one serious incident in which two persons were killed and a few other minor disturbances, the public went to the polls peacefully on 15th April. The influence of the two Shia' feudal leaders, Ahmed el Assad and Sabri Hamadi, ensured the return of candidates who could be relied on to support the President in his policy without question. The only political leader in the two constituencies of South Lebanon and the Bekaa who was strong enough to adopt an independent policy was Riad Bey Solh. In the north Hamid Frangie was similarly inclined to take an independent line, but the remainder of the candidates there had all been persuaded to join the presidential ranks. Most of the leading politicians contested the Beirut constituency and were elected by a substantial majority. Though here, when at one moment the results

appeared to be going against the "great," as they were called locally, there is evidence of a certain number of actual payments having been made to the electors and also of the appearance on the scene of *abadays*, or toughs, who prevented some of the electors from daring to put in an appearance. The real electoral battle took place, however, in the Mount Lebanon area and particularly in the Chouf where four Government and five Opposition supporters were declared elected. The result of the election as a whole was an overwhelming victory for those who supported the President's policy. Subsequent grouping has shown that sixty-six of the seventy-seven Deputies can be relied upon to support the presidential policies, ten are in opposition and one constitutes a variable factor. Cynics are inclined to suggest that the reason why, with the exception of the incidents in the Beirut constituency mentioned above, the elections on the whole were fair, was that the President of the Republic was confident of the general support in the country for his policy, without the need to have to recourse to trickery; but whatever the truth of this may be, it is to be hoped that the generally satisfactory nature of the elections will serve as a precedent for the future.

5. The triumvirate Government continued in office until the new Chamber of Deputies met on 5th June, and the President thereupon called on Abdulla Bey Yafi, who formed the new Ministry as follows:—

- Abdulla Bey Yafi (Sunni Moslem): Prime Minister and Interior.
- Philippe Negib Boulos (Greek Orthodox): Deputy Prime Minister and Public Works.
- Emile Lahoud (Maronite): Education and Social Affairs.
- Philippe Takla (Greek Catholic): Finance and National Economy.
- Joseph Hrawi (Maronite): Agriculture.
- Maitre Beshir el Awar (Druze): Health.
- Charles Hérou (Maronite): Foreign Affairs.
- Rashid Beydoun (Shia' Moslem): Defence.
- Mohamed Safieddin (Shia' Moslem): P.T.T. and Information.
- Rashid Kerame (Sunni Moslem): Justice.

The Prime Minister was allowed considerable freedom of movement by the President in forming his Government, and several of the President's old and faithful supporters, such as the Emir Majid Arslan were left out in the cold. A further sign of the times was

that the President threw over Sabri Bey Hamdi, whose connexion with hashish smuggling was notorious, and the latter's father-in-law, Ahmed Bey el Assad, became President of the Chamber, a position which does not seem to preclude him from continued political activity of a partisan nature. The new Government had the usual majority in the Chamber and the Prime Minister announced an ambitious programme for the reform of the administration, the abolition of abuses and the placing of the country on a sound economic basis. Riad Bey Solh immediately began to intrigue against the new Cabinet, but his activities were cut short by his untimely death at the hands of an assassin at Amman on 16th July. So perished one of the great figures in the Arab world and one who believed that Anglo-Arab friendship provided the best guarantee for the future stability of the Middle East.

6. There were demonstrations in the streets of Beirut as soon as the news of his death was received which unfortunately rapidly degenerated into mob violence. The army, which had had several hours advance warning before the news broke, took prompt measures and calm was restored within a few hours. There was one fatal casualty. A similar attempt a few nights later by the mob to demonstrate when the news of King Abdullah's assassination was received was suppressed before it had time to develop. There is no reason to suppose that it was the Communists who were directly responsible for these demonstrations. Nevertheless, the small and illegal Communist Party has not been inactive. Reorganised early in the year, it has avoided clashes with the security authorities by refraining from attempts to hold open meetings, and its activities have centred mainly round the Peace Campaign. The Persian oil dispute, the Egyptian crisis and the Middle East Command project were all held up as examples of imperialism and war-mongering on the part of the Western Powers, and it must be admitted that the party has made some headway in exploiting Arab nationalism, even though the mass of the population remains unattracted to communism.

7. Abdulla Bey Yafi began energetically by undertaking an expansive campaign to destroy the hashish crop which covered over 5,000 acres in the Bekaa valley. Owing to the opposition of the peasant growers military forces had to be employed and the size of these prevented any clashes. The price of hashish rose rapidly but as stocks from

previous years' crops were considerable, the income of the hashish traders is not likely to be seriously affected and they are pinning their hopes on there being a less zealous Prime Minister when the time comes to plant next year's crop. In other spheres less energy has been shown by the Government. The Prime Minister approached this legation with a view to securing the interest of British insurance companies in a scheme which he adumbrated of consolidating the pension scheme of Government officials to provide them with greater security than they received at present under the Lebanese pensions law. But as a result of the unsettled state of the Middle East generally during the latter part of 1951 the British insurance companies have shown a marked lack of interest to become involved.

8. There were rumours during the summer parliamentary recess that Sheikh Selim would muster his supporters and seek to overthrow Abdulla Bey Yafi who has no personal following. Owing to presidential intervention Abdulla Bey received a respite, but as the year closed he expressed his view to members of the legation staff that he could not continue much longer, both by reason of presidential interference in his work and the fact that Sheikh Selim was sufficiently powerful to withdraw his parliamentary support whenever it suited his book. Abdulla Bey Yafi is a man whose merit is honesty but who lacks the force of personality to push his policies through in the face of the opposition and vested interests that surround him.

Foreign Relations

9. The division of the Lebanon into religious factions, to which reference has already been made, is not without its effect on the foreign policy of the country. The President of the Republic and most members of the Cabinet, including the Moslem members, are in favour of supporting the Western Powers and have made many gestures in earnest of this support. Nevertheless, when the interests of the Western Powers conflict with the supposed interests of the Arab countries a large section of the mob, when suitably stirred, can be relied upon to turn against the West. The President and Government have therefore felt obliged to proceed warily and not to emphasise in public the fact that they realise their interests are closely bound up with those of the Western Powers.

10. When General Sir Brian Robertson decided, following his appointment to the

command of the Middle East Land Forces, to visit the countries within his purview, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, then Philippe Bey Takla, informed His Majesty's Minister officially that in time of international emergency the Lebanon would side with the Western Powers. The decision was however kept secret from the public for the reason given. This promise was reiterated to General Robertson when he came on 5th February. At the same time the Lebanese agreed to organise certain sections of their armed forces in such a manner as to dovetail in with the strategic requirements of the Middle East Command. Considerable supplies of arms and ammunition have been made available for purchase by the Lebanese authorities, although the British rearmament programme has led to failure to deliver certain categories of which the Lebanese were especially in need. The Lebanese authorities had previously asked for an R.A.F. Mission to train their small air force and this began to operate at Rayak aerodrome during the course of the summer. Unfortunately, as is inevitable in Eastern countries, administrative inefficiency on the part of the Lebanese has led to a slow start in getting the members of the mission comfortably housed and this has naturally caused some dissatisfaction.

11. The Four-Power proposals for a joint Middle East Command, coinciding with the rapid deterioration in Anglo-Egyptian relations, led the Lebanese Government to proceed cautiously in their public declarations and the President preferred to wait and see. The two fears expressed by the President and the Minister for Foreign Affairs were:

- (a) that the Arab countries might be called upon to associate either directly or indirectly with Israel, who was their greatest enemy by reason of her potential expansive tendencies at their expense; and
- (b) that either in an emergency or in advance of an emergency French or even Turkish troops might be sent to the Lebanon. With Lebanese mistrust of French intentions and the fear that France might again seek to regain her influence in this country the President sought assurance that such would not be the case.

Nevertheless his Excellency and the Minister for Foreign Affairs were out to defeat Egyptian manoeuvres to sabotage the scheme and the Minister for Foreign Affairs,

in concert with some of his colleagues, was able to prevent any public declaration of policy by the Arab League condemning the proposals which Egypt would have wished. Egyptian mishandling of the susceptibilities of the other Arab States was not without its effect. The Egyptian Chamber of Deputies called upon the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies to declare its support of the Egyptian cause. Motions in support of Egypt were passed on three occasions but were little more than lip service to the cause of Arab unity. There were a few minor demonstrations in Beirut mostly by students which led to one person being seriously injured.

12. There were no incidents of significance on the Lebanon-Israel border during the year and as a result of the détente the frontier at Naqura was opened for the passage of diplomats and United Nations officials.

Economic

13. Relations with Syria have been an economic rather than a political problem. With the economy of the two countries linked as they always have been, the Syrian decision to treat the Lebanon entirely as a foreign country gave rise to numerous problems in the commercial communities. The repercussions were particularly felt in Tripoli which has acted as the port of the Syrian hinterland. Moreover, as a Moslem city, Tripoli has shown separatist tendencies but thanks to careful management on the part of the President of the susceptibilities of the Tripolitanian leaders (and in particular the Kerame family), the issue never came to a head. Negotiations between Syria and the Lebanon for an economic settlement continued in a desultory way throughout the year but without achieving any substantial results, and with their keen commercial sense Lebanese business men rapidly adjusted themselves to the new conditions. Although they were heavily laden with stocks collected during the early days of the Korean war the rise in world prices has enabled them to sell these large stocks without loss. The Syrian pound over a large part of the year was at a premium of up to nearly 10 per cent. over the Lebanese pound but as the year closed the adjustment of Lebanese business men to the new conditions was reflected in the fact that on 31st December the Syrian pound was at a discount of $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the Lebanese.

14. Internally the year was marked by the running down of the credit balances

which the Lebanon had collected during the war to a point where it was necessary to reduce capital expenditure and balance outgoings against income. The Government of Abdulla Bey Yafi has therefore attempted to effect certain economies in the administration and at the same time rendered the collection of taxes more efficacious. Although some of the large balances had been frittered away, several capital projects of importance will bring in good returns to the country. The most important of these is undoubtedly Khaldé aerodrome which was brought fully in operation during the course of the year. Only the amenities have now to be completed. The result has been not only increased income from air traffic but also the development of Beirut as an important international junction. With the ratification of the Air Services Agreement between the Lebanon and Great Britain there will be increased British participation in the traffic of the air port.

15. A general agreement for technical co-operation under the Point-Four Programme was signed between the United States and the Lebanon in May, and two major projects have already been put in hand with Point-Four assistance. The first of these is the water-power and irrigation development of the Litani River Valley, and an extensive survey of the area, not yet published, was carried out by a large team of American experts in June and July. The second is the establishment of four new schools in the American university for the training of students selected by the different Middle East Governments in agriculture,

engineering, preventive medicine, economics, finance and public administration.

16. Lastly, there remains the problem of the refugees, of whom there are some 140,000 in the Lebanon, 107,000 of them still on the ration strength of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. The Lebanese have maintained their refusal to allow any refugees of Palestinian origin to be resettled in the Lebanon. They have also stated that they object to the agency assisting refugees to emigrate to any country outside the Middle East. Moreover, the Lebanese Government has with very few exceptions refused to allow the construction by the agency of permanent or semi-permanent accommodation, and this, coupled with a world shortage of tents, has led to unnecessary hardship during the wet and cold of the Lebanese winter. It is only fair to add that the presence of the refugees constitutes a particularly grave problem for the Lebanon, since the country is already heavily populated in relation to its size and resources and there is a good deal of unemployment, while the influx of these large numbers, who are mostly Moslems, also gives rise to fears among the Christians that they will be out-numbered as a result. The refugees are consequently regarded, by and large, as being in the Lebanon on sufferance only, and the country is anxious for them to be settled elsewhere in the Middle East as quickly as possible. Many of the refugees themselves, stirred up by the followers of Haj Amin al Hussein, the ex-Mufti of Jerusalem, continue to demand their return to Palestine, and they are thus both unreasonable and difficult to handle.

EL 1223/7

No. 4

CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE LEBANESE MINISTER

(1) Lebanese Request for Training Aircraft; (2) Relations between Israel and the Arab States

Mr. Eden to Mr. Chapman-Andrews (Beirut)

(No. 52. Confidential) *Foreign Office,*
Sir, *26th March, 1952.*

The Lebanese Minister came to see me this morning. After speaking generally of the friendly relations between our two countries, His Excellency said that, as I knew, the Lebanese had an R.A.F. Mission in their country. They were most anxious to continue their association with us in this

sphere. Early in 1951 it was agreed that a Royal Air Force Training Mission of four officers and eight n.c.o.s would assist the Royal Air Force Adviser to the Lebanon Government, Wing-Commander Carter. The Mission arrived in the Lebanon last year and a programme for training the Lebanese Air Force has been worked out. Now the Mission estimates that the Air

Force could use a small number of jet aircraft next year. Meanwhile was there any hope that we could let the Lebanese have two jets in the course of this year for training purposes?

2. I told M. Khouri I was sorry I could give him no assurance on this point. He would know about the needs of our Air Force from the Under-Secretary of State for Air's announcement recently in the House of Commons. We were in urgent need of all the fighter aircraft we could provide for ourselves. The Minister emphasised that for the moment it was only two trainers he was asking for. I said that I was sorry but that we were already in arrears for delivery of trainers where we had given a promise long ago. I would naturally enquire into the position but I could hold out, I feared, no hope of being able to satisfy such a demand even for two trainers this year. I enquired non-committally whether, if they were available, two Spitfires would be acceptable to the Lebanese Government if jet trainers were out of the question. The Minister replied that if Wing-Commander Carter were satisfied with these aircraft he thought his Government would be.

3. Before the Minister left I asked him what was his view about relations between Israel and the Arab States. There have been reports of a certain decrease in tension and the Lebanese had always tried to play a constructive part in these matters. What did he think the chances were of a favourable outcome? The Minister said he was not optimistic. He did not attach much significance to the recent statement by Zafrullah Khan. If Israel really wanted a *détente* with her neighbours there were two things she must do. One was to pay compensation for property taken and the other was to seek to assist in the refugee problem. After all this problem had been created by Israel going beyond the frontiers which had been laid down and accepted by the United Nations. Much as the Lebanon wanted to see a reduction in tension, his hopes were clearly not high. He added, how could they be with the problem of 160,000 Arab refugees on their hands in the Lebanon alone.

4. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Minister at Tel Aviv and to the Head of B.M.E.O. (Fayid).

I am, &c.

ANTHONY EDEN.

EL 1101/3

No. 5

ECONOMIC REPORT, MARCH-APRIL, 1952

Mr. Chapman-Andrews to Mr. Eden. (Received 14th June)

Introduction

The improvement in the economic situation which had been hoped for as a result of the agreement with Syria has not taken place, and gloom has been increased by recent Syrian economic legislation, which is detrimental to Lebanese interests. There is no improvement in the local market. Foreign trade figures for 1951 reveal the usual large deficit on visible trade, the value of imports being between four and five times that of exports.

2. Prices and cost of living

The wholesale price index (1950=100) continued its fall, dropping from the February figure of 121.0 to 119.4 in March and 117.8 in April.

Movements in the individual groups were:—

	Food	Raw Materials	Fuel
February ...	127.5	122.9	99.1
March ...	129.7	110.3	98.2
April ...	129.9	107.2	98.2

Finished Goods

	(a) Textiles	(b) Others	Building Materials
February ...	114.6	122.7	128.0
March ...	111	118.3	127.3
April ...	104.1	117.9	125.8

Apart from the food-stuffs group (in which grains, meat, rice and vegetables registered slight increases) falls in price were general, but were especially heavy in yarns and piece goods.

The cost-of-living index (August 1939=100) stayed at its February figure of 474 during March, but in April fell to 473.

Movements in the individual groups were:—

	Food	Housing	Fuel	Clothing	Miscellaneous
February ...	610	148	238	609	446
March ...	612	148	238	609	446
April ...	612	148	227	606	443

Carbon and underwear were the main commodities which fell in price.

3. Home Trade

Trade has continued stagnant during the past two months, and falls in prices overseas are watched with apprehension. Banks are being cautious and credit is difficult: ready money is scarce.

The textile trade is particularly slack, and agents report that scarcely any business is being done. There was some movement of stocks of summerweight cloth, but the volume of sales has been disappointing.

4. Foreign Trade

Figures for foreign trade in 1951 have now been published, the first complete calendar year since the breakdown of the Customs Union with Syria in March, 1950.

Details for the year are:—

	£ Leb. million
Imports	321
Exports	98
Re-exports	8
Transit	1,137

NOTES—

(a) The foregoing figures are deceptive, the value of imports being based on the "official" exchange rate of the Lebanese pound (£ Leb. 6.19=£1 sterling) whereas the other values are based on its free market exchange rate (at present £ Leb. 9.50 approximately=£1 sterling). The actual value of imports is therefore very much higher than that quoted.

(b) Of the large figure for transit, £ Leb. 355 million is accounted for by gold, and £ Leb. 459 million by oil.

Syria only just maintained her position as Lebanon's leading supplier with exports to the value of £ Leb. 59 million. United States was second with £ Leb. 57 million worth of exports, France third with £ Leb. 38 million and United Kingdom fourth with £ Leb. 31 million. United States was Lebanon's largest customer with £ Leb. 22.7 million worth of imports, Syria second with £ Leb. 22.0 million and United Kingdom third with £ Leb. 2.6 million.

Principal imports were grain, flour, cattle, liquid fuels, raw wool, raw cotton, textiles, gold and vehicles. The main exports were citrus fruits, apples, vegetables, cement, raw wool, raw cotton, yarns, grey cloth and articles of gold.

(a) Industry

There has been no change in the industrial situation and nothing of interest to report.

Output from the Chekka cement factory was 20,211 tons in March and 27,509 tons in April.

Building permits were issued as follows:—

March—90 permits for 133 floors with a total area of 26,263 square metres.
April—64 permits for 111 floors with a total area of 22,258 square metres.

There are now a number of American experts in Lebanon considering possible projects to be carried out under the Point IV Programme. No projects have yet been started.

5. (b) Agriculture and Forestry

Most crops this year show signs of being good. The grape crop may be a little less than usual owing to damage suffered through late snow and heavy rain. It is hoped to export up to 2 million cases of citrus fruits this year.

The movements of locust swarms in Saudi Arabia and Jordan were watched with some anxiety, but so far there has been no threat to Lebanon.

6. Tourism

Travelling expenses of tourists from Arab States are to be reimbursed as in the last two years, although on a slightly less generous scale.

For an uninterrupted stay of 12 days—20 per cent. of the fare will be refunded.
For an uninterrupted stay of 30 days—30 per cent. of the fare will be refunded.
For an uninterrupted stay of 45 days—50 per cent. of the fare will be refunded.
For an uninterrupted stay of 70 days—100 per cent. of the fare will be refunded.

7. Communications

Early in March a new telephone line between Paris and Beirut was opened.

Radio-telephone communication was opened with all West-European capitals (via Paris) on 20th March.

A Civil Air Agreement between Brazil and Lebanon was ratified by the Chamber of Deputies on 4th March.

8. Public Utilities and Concessionary Companies

(a) Oil

Conversations between the Lebanese Government and the Iraq Petroleum Company were begun, but no new agreement had been reached by the end of April. The Government also started parallel negotiations with the Trans-Arabian Pipeline Company.

Force could use a small number of jet aircraft next year. Meanwhile was there any hope that we could let the Lebanese have two jets in the course of this year for training purposes?

2. I told M. Khouri I was sorry I could give him no assurance on this point. He would know about the needs of our Air Force from the Under-Secretary of State for Air's announcement recently in the House of Commons. We were in urgent need of all the lighter aircraft we could provide for ourselves. The Minister emphasised that for the moment it was only two trainers he was asking for. I said that I was sorry but that we were already in arrears for delivery of trainers where we had given a promise long ago. I would naturally enquire into the position but I could hold out, I feared, no hope of being able to satisfy such a demand even for two trainers this year. I enquired non-committally whether, if they were available, two Spitfires would be acceptable to the Lebanese Government if jet trainers were out of the question. The Minister replied that if Wing-Commander Carter were satisfied with these aircraft he thought his Government would be.

3. Before the Minister left I asked him what was his view about relations between Israel and the Arab States. There have been reports of a certain decrease in tension and the Lebanese had always tried to play a constructive part in these matters. What did he think the chances were of a favourable outcome? The Minister said he was not optimistic. He did not attach much significance to the recent statement by Zafrullah Khan. If Israel really wanted *détente* with her neighbours there were two things she must do. One was to pay compensation for property taken and the other was to seek to assist in the refugee problem. After all this problem had been created by Israel going beyond the frontiers which have been laid down and accepted by the United Nations. Much as the Lebanon wanted to see a reduction in tension, his hopes were clearly not high. He added, how could he be with the problem of 160,000 Arab refugees on their hands in the Lebanon alone.

4. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Minister at Tel Aviv and to the Head of B.M.E.O. (Fayid).

I am, &c.

ANTHONY EDEN.

EL 1101/3

No. 5

ECONOMIC REPORT, MARCH-APRIL, 1952

Mr. Chapman-Andrews to Mr. Eden. (Received 14th June)

Introduction

The improvement in the economic situation which had been hoped for as a result of the agreement with Syria has not taken place, and gloom has been increased by recent Syrian economic legislation, which is detrimental to Lebanese interests. There is no improvement in the local market. Foreign trade figures for 1951 reveal the usual large deficit on visible trade, the value of imports being between four and five times that of exports.

2. Prices and cost of living

The wholesale price index (1950=100) continued its fall, dropping from the February figure of 121.0 to 119.4 in March and 117.8 in April.

Movements in the individual groups were:—

	Food	Raw Materials	Fuel
February ...	127.5	122.9	99.1
March ...	129.7	110.3	98.2
April ...	129.9	107.2	98.2

	Finished Goods		Building Materials
	(a) Textiles	(b) Others	
February ...	114.6	122.7	128.0
March ...	111	118.3	127.3
April ...	104.1	117.9	125.8

Apart from the food-stuffs group (in which grains, meat, rice and vegetables registered slight increases) falls in price were general, but were especially heavy in yarns and piece goods.

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(a) Oil

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(b) Concessionary Companies

Two neutral (Dutch) experts were invited by the Government to investigate and report on the dispute involving the Beirut Electricity Company (mentioned in the previous Economic Summary). Their report will be presented in the middle of May.

A "Commission Supérieure de l'Inspection des Concessions" was created by decree on 11th March to review all existing concessions.

9. Labour

There has been no fundamental change in the unemployment situation. Good weather has meant a resumption of work among agricultural workers and builders, but there are still some 50,000 unemployed in the country.

There were no strikes owing to labour troubles during March and April. The strike amongst members of the legal profession (referred to in the previous Economic Report ended on 4th April with no decision having been taken.

10. Economic Relations with Foreign States*(a) Syria*

The agreement signed in February with Syria was ratified in March, but relations between the two States have not improved. Syria passed a decree on 3rd March which virtually excludes foreign merchants from the Syrian market, hitherto one of their main sources of income of Lebanese merchants. The Lebanese Government has made several attempts to have Lebanese nationals and Lebanese firms exempted from the terms of the decree, but without success.

(b) Miscellaneous

There were press reports about possible discussions on trade agreements with Chile, Brazil, Venezuela and Belgium, and reports that the existing agreements with Italy and Germany would be amended.

11. Finance*(a) Banknote circulation*

Banknote circulation dropped sharply in March from £Leb. 211 million to £Leb. 199 million and to £Leb. 197 million in April.

(b) Free Market Exchange Rates

The following were the rates (in Lebanese pounds), quoted on the days shown, for the principal currencies:—

	March			
	4	11	18	25
Sterling	9.15	9.11	9.21	9.15
Dollar	3.835	3.835	3.835	3.835
1,000 French francs	7.95	8.10	8.55	8.60

	April			
	1	8	15	22
Sterling	9.31	9.35	9.36	9.32
Dollar	3.83	3.81	3.775	3.735
1,000 French francs	8.65	8.85	9.10	9.05

Sterling and the French franc appreciated sharply, but the dollar weakened slightly.

(c) Gold

The fluctuation in the price of gold (in Lebanese pounds) were as follows:—

	March			
	5	12	19	26
Sovereign	45.4	45.2	44.5	44.6
Ingot (mean) ...	280.5	279.5	275	278

	April			
	2	9	16	23
Sovereign	43.6	43.3	42.75	42.75
Ingot (mean) ...	275	273	270.5	266.5

(d) Syrian Currency

The Syrian pound was at an average discount of 1.4 per cent. *vis-à-vis* the Lebanese pound during March, but in April the discount increased steadily and was 4 per cent. by the end of the month.

(e) Lebanese Currency Cover

The Banque de Syrie et du Liban (the bank of issue) published a statement of currency cover as at 15th March, 1952. This statement read:—

	£ L. 000	£ L. 000
Banknotes in circulation ...		199,000
Cover—		
A.—Gold	96,349	
Foreign currency	9,765	
		106,114
B.—£ Lebanese—		
Covered by Treasury notes or bonds	48,008	
Loan to cover notes in circulation in Syria in February 1948	44,589	
Other elements	289	
		92,886
		199,000

(f) Stock Exchange

There were reports that the Government was considering the creation of a Stock Exchange at Beirut. It was suggested that if an exchange was created, much of the business at present handled by Alexandria Stock Exchange would move to Beirut.

LORD MOUNTBATTEN'S VISIT TO THE LEBANON

Mr. Chapman-Andrews to Mr. Eden. (Received 8th August)

(No. 161)

Beirut,

5th August, 1952.

Sir,

I have the honour to report that the Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean, Admiral the Earl Mountbatten of Burma, K.G., visited the Lebanon from the 1st to the 4th August in his despatch vessel, H.M.S. *Surprise*.

2. The Commander-in-Chief sailed into Beirut harbour in the early morning of Friday, the 1st August, and the usual salutes were fired. At 9 a.m. the Commander-in-Chief called on me and I returned the call half an hour later. I then took Lord Mountbatten to sign the book of the President of the Lebanese Republic and to call in succession on the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Prime Minister, the Minister for National Defence, the Commander-in-Chief of the Lebanese armed forces and the Administrator of the town of Beirut.

3. We then drove to the President's summer residence at Aley where the Commander-in-Chief had an audience with the President of the Republic who afterwards entertained him to a luncheon at which Lady Mountbatten and their two daughters, Lady Brabourne and Lady Pamela Mountbatten, were also present, together with my wife and myself, certain high Lebanese personalities and some members of my staff.

4. On that evening I gave a reception in honour of Lord and Lady Mountbatten which was attended by some 250 people (out of over 350 invited) including Lebanese guests, members of the diplomatic corps, British residents and officers of H.M.S. *Surprise*.

5. On Saturday, the 2nd August, the Commander-in-Chief returned the President's hospitality at a luncheon on board H.M.S. *Surprise*. The President was received with a guard of honour and was given a salute of twenty-one guns on leaving.

6. That evening the Commander-in-Chief gave a reception on board H.M.S. *Surprise* to which rather more than 300

guests were invited and later he and Lady Mountbatten dined with me and afterwards visited the dance given for the officers accompanying the Commander-in-Chief by the St. George's Anglo-American Club. The United States Minister and his wife accompanied us.

7. On Sunday, the 3rd August, the Commander-in-Chief left Beirut by air for Tripoli where, after calling on the Administrator of North Lebanon he spent the day privately with friends. He left Tripoli by air on Monday at 9 a.m. on 4th August for his official visit to Damascus. H.M.S. *Surprise* sailed from Beirut on the morning of the 3rd August.

8. As well as taking part in the official programme for the Commander-in-Chief, Lady Mountbatten had a full programme of her own including an inspection on the morning of Saturday, the 2nd of August, of the activities in Tripoli of the "Save the Children Fund" under Lady Johnston, and a private visit to Baalbek.

9. The usual entertainment was provided for the naval ratings from H.M.S. *Surprise* but owing to the decision that H.M.S. *Glasgow* and H.M.S. *Manxman* were not visiting Beirut it was not possible to arrange any sporting events.

10. Despite the reduced size of the visit there were many expressions of pleasure both personally and in the press at the visit of a unit of the Royal Navy and at the presence of Lord Mountbatten himself, whose visit here two years ago was still well remembered.

11. I should however mention that neither the Soviet Minister nor any satellite Heads of Missions, or any member of their staffs, attended either of the receptions to which they were invited. The Persian Minister also absented himself.

12. I am enclosing an extra copy of this despatch for transmission to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty and I am sending a copy to the Head of the British Middle East Office at Fayid.

I have, &c.

E. A. CHAPMAN-ANDREWS.

POLITICAL SITUATION

Mr. Barnes to Mr. Eden. (Received 9th September)(No. 168)
Sir,*Beirut,*
4th September, 1952.

The internal political situation in the Lebanon is developing fast from the position reported in Mr. Chapman-Andrews's despatch No. 185 of the 28th of August.

2. There seem to be three main controlling factors. First, there is the attitude of the President himself and those who normally follow his instructions. Secondly, there is the attitude of the present Prime Minister, Sami Solh, and, thirdly, there is the attitude of the various elements of the avowed opposition.

3. The President of the Republic himself appears to be in an indecisive mood. At the beginning of this week I received reports from confidential sources that the President was contemplating a very early offer of ministerial portfolios to Opposition leaders (including both the moderate Hamid Frangieh and the much more extreme Kamal Jumblatt) in a so-called government of national union. I also heard from the same sources that, if this offer was rejected and the Opposition continued on their course of outspoken antagonism to the President himself, his family and his régime, the President would seriously contemplate resigning himself and handing over his powers to a three-man commission of government of whom one member would be the present Commander-in-Chief of the Lebanese armed forces. Within the last twenty-four hours, however, he seems to have changed his line. While talking boldly about fighting to preserve his own position he nevertheless seems unwilling to take any step towards the formation of a new Government before the Chamber of Deputies meets on the 9th of September, on the pretext that it would be unconstitutional for him to do so. None the less the President makes no secret of his discontent with the present Prime Minister and of his hope that the latter will be defeated when the Chamber meets. As the Prime Minister is only likely to be defeated in the Chamber if he consents to put the issue of confidence, it appears that the President has gone so far as to instruct those Ministers who are normally subservient to his orders to resign before the Chamber meets if the Prime Minister refuses to put the issue of confidence.

4. In these circumstances the Prime Minister would be left to face the Chamber alone and his attitude is therefore important. It springs from his conviction that the opposition is directed not against the Government of the moment but against the President himself, and the Prime Minister therefore sees no reason why he should be made the scapegoat for the régime. He is therefore at present determined to face the Chamber but not to run the risks attendant on putting the issue of confidence. If he is outmanoeuvred and forced to resign he has announced his intention of making revelations which would inculcate the régime from the top downwards. Although I am inclined to discount the rumours that Sami Solh has been taking advice from Colonel Shishakli or other Syrian notables, it is none the less possible that, if forced to resign, he might take his stand on the confessional issue and seek to rally the Sunni Moslems to his side. If so he would, of course, be a powerful adherent to the ranks of the Opposition and the situation might rapidly become explosive.

5. The Opposition for their part have met twice in the past week and are doing their best to form a united front. It is reported that at their most recent meeting they decided not to join in a government of so-called national union but to insist on having all the portfolios at their disposal so that they could carry through unimpeded the programme of reforms on which they are bent. At the same time counsels of moderation seem to have prevailed to the extent that they are not at present proposing to insist on reform of the Constitution which would strike at the prerogatives of the President. I consider that this is largely a matter of tactics since their dissatisfaction with the present occupant of the Presidential chair is in no way modified. There are however several members of the Opposition who themselves aspire one day to occupy that chair and who would perhaps therefore be reluctant to see its prerogatives curtailed.

6. The Opposition are to meet again before Parliament opens but I understand that in their present mood they are determined, unless the President meets their demands (and I think it possible that they

would be prepared to compromise on the number of seats that they would require in the Cabinet) to seek to enforce their case by bringing about strikes and demonstrations at the same time as the opening of Parliament.

7. A situation governed by these factors is clearly dangerous since political passions can rapidly be inflamed to violence in the Middle East particularly if the fuel of religious differences is added to the flames. The present delicate balance in the Lebanon may open the door to a certain amount of corruption but it does nevertheless ensure that there is in the Arab world a country and a Government with a strong Christian element and with a high regard for the West.

If that leaven in the politics of this region were to disappear to the accompaniment of violence and disorder it is impossible to see in what direction events might develop. The most serious danger is of course that the evident disruption which would follow in the Lebanon would tempt the appetites of this country's neighbours and would thus bring into play our serious responsibilities under the Tripartite Declaration of May 1950.

8. I am sending copies of this despatch to the Head of the British Middle East Office at Fayid and to Her Majesty's Representative at Damascus.

I have, &c.

E. J. W. BARNES.

POLITICAL EVENTS IN THE LEBANON—ELECTION OF
CAMILLE CHAMOUN AS PRESIDENT*Mr. Chapman-Andrews to Mr. Eden. (Received 30th September)*(No. 197. Confidential) *Beirut.*Sir, *24th September, 1952.*

I have reported by telegram the swift succession of political events in the Lebanon since Mr. Barnes's despatch No. 188 of 4th September, 1952.

2. That despatch was written a few days before the so-called "extraordinary session" of Parliament, though no one (except possibly the Prime Minister himself, with his thunderbolt up his sleeve) could have foretold how extraordinary it would prove to be—a single meeting after which the Chamber broke up in confusion, not to meet again until a fortnight later for the election of a new President of the Republic, during which time the country had had three new Prime Ministers, none of whom had ever held office before and two of whom had certainly never even aspired to it.

3. The meeting of Parliament on 9th September opened decorously enough with the Minister of Finance, M. Emile Lahoud, reading an agreed ministerial declaration on the achievements of the Government since it was formed in February of this year. When he sat down, the Prime Minister, M. Sami Solh, took the floor and delivered a long harangue largely devoted to the impossibility of governing the country in face of the interference and the corruption of the immediate family and entourage of the President of the Republic. He ended by

saying that he had no interest in obtaining the confidence of Parliament and that he would forthwith present his resignation to the Head of the State. He then left the Chamber, followed by a handful of Opposition members.

4. While the Prime Minister was speaking his Ministers (of whom two had already resigned) one by one left the Government bench and resumed their ordinary places as Deputies, in a silent gesture of resignation and dissociation from their chief. As soon as the Prime Minister had finished speaking, the Minister of Finance rose again to dissociate himself and his other former colleagues from Sami Solh's remarks and to emphasise that they had not been approved by the Council of Ministers as a whole. The proceedings then broke up in some confusion.

5. Sami Solh had thrown his hand in. If he had stuck to his guns, refused to put the issue of confidence and announced in effect "j'y suis, j'y reste," the President might have been hard put to it to force him out in the then prevailing temper of the Opposition and of the country. As it was, the President of the Republic was immediately able, despite the absence of any formal resignation by the Prime Minister, to announce that his speech was tantamount to resignation and to appoint a three-man caretaker government of officials, while he

himself started consultations for a permanent Government.

6. Two things soon became clear in the course of these consultations. First, everyone, including the President, was now convinced that Saeb Salam should take up the inheritance which had long been awaiting him and for which he had long been waiting. On 12th September he was accordingly charged with the task of taking soundings for the formation of a government. Secondly, it was clear that the Opposition would not take part in any new Government constructed on the old formula. When they saw that events were moving in this direction they called a general strike (that is to say, the closure of the bazaars, for Monday and Tuesday, 15th and 16th September. They were supported in this course by the two previous Prime Ministers, Abdullah Yafi and Sami Solh, both Sunni Moslems of Beirut.

7. Saeb Salam therefore had two tasks: first, to form a broadly-based Government which could be represented as a Government of new faces and honest administrators and, secondly, to prove that as a Sunni Moslem himself he could break the strike, or at least neutralise it. As the second task called for immediate action while the formation of a Government needed time, Saeb Salam decided that the authority of a Prime Minister designate was not enough for him and that he must assume the real power. Accordingly early on Sunday, 14th September, he took over the office of Prime Minister from M. Nazim Akkari (in normal times director-general of the Prime Minister's office) while retaining the other two "Pooch-Bahs" of the three-man Government, M. Moussa Mobarak and M. Basil Trad, both formerly members of the Supreme Council of Customs. He also issued a statement making clear that, although he had no wish to restrict anyone's liberties, including the right to strike, he was none the less determined to prevent all gatherings and demonstrations which were likely to interfere with public order and the personal safety of citizens. This concession to the right to strike was perhaps the first sign of the crack which was to develop in the fabric of the régime. M. Kamal Jumblatt meanwhile, who remained the mainspring of the Opposition's determination to strike and refusal to compromise, had issued a statement making clear that the aim of the strike was to achieve widespread economic and social reform and bidding openly for the support of the working classes and unemployed. It

looked at this stage therefore as if some sort of violent clash was inevitable.

8. In the event, however, the first day of the strike, although it was much more wide-spread both in Beirut and other principal centres than had been seen before or was expected for this occasion, passed comparatively calmly. There were a few demonstrations, among which the Communists took the opportunity to parade the Partisans of Peace, and other isolated incidents of violence. But when on the second day the strike was slightly less complete than before it began to look as if it would merely be accepted by both sides as a gesture of non-co-operation and that the inevitable explosion would be postponed.

9. However, the confidence of the leaders of the régime had been shaken not only by the inability of its leading supporters in Beirut, including Saeb Salam the Prime Minister, and the President's close relative, M. Henri Pharaon, to persuade shopkeepers to open, but also by the difficulties of forming the kind of Government which the situation seemed to demand. The list of Ministers on which Saeb Salam was working contained the usual allocation of portfolios to leaders of the various religious communities and of the different regions. But it also contained one or two officials and a journalist and it was hoped to crown the edifice by appointing as joint Deputy Prime Ministers the former President of the Republic under the French Mandate, M. Alfred Naccache, and the Lebanese Minister at Washington, M. Charles Malik. Naccache in fact refused to serve unless with Malik as his colleague and there ensued a series of telegrams between Beirut and Washington trying to persuade Malik to accept. It was thought that his international reputation, his close relations with the United States, his *soi-disant* intellectual eminence and his lack of connexion with the Beirut political scene, would enhance the prestige of the new Government at home and abroad. M. Malik, however, was not to be easily caught. In his statement he made it clear that he not only wanted more information about the sort of parlour into which he was being invited but that he also wanted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a free hand in forming its policy. In this way the attempt to form a broad-based Government dragged on while it became increasingly clear that it had failed to achieve the sort of spectacular success which alone would have made it worth while. At the same time Saeb Salam tried to placate the critics by

wholesale dismissal of senior officials, including the directors-general of most Ministries who were offered up as propitiation for the sins of the régime.

10. In fact, on Tuesday, 16th September (the second day of the strike) the Opposition began to gain courage and the kidnapping of a leading trade unionist supporting the strike, which was attributed to agents of Henri Pharaon, was seized on as an excuse for prolonging the strike for another day. On the afternoon of Wednesday, 17th September, ten Deputies, headed by Kamal Jumblatt and Camille Chamoun, inscribed in the registers of Parliament a petition to the President of the Chamber asserting the sovereignty of Parliament and calling upon the President of the Republic to resign immediately. That same evening various Sunni Moslems who had previously been loyal to the régime, including Deputies from Tripoli, came out in support of the petition, and before long the Prime Minister himself, together with his two predecessors in office, Sami Solh and Abdullah Yafi, followed suit. That night, while the Opposition leaders were planning an extension of the strike, Saeb Salam himself waited upon the President of the Republic who was living at his private summer residence at Aley, and, acquainting him with the situation, urged him to resign. As towards midnight the news spread, most of the Deputies collected at the President's residence, and a night of political manoeuvring and efforts to avoid the inevitable began. Faced with Saeb Salam's uncompromising statement that no Sunni could be found to accept office as Prime Minister, the President, disbelieving, first had recourse to Hussein Aweini, a former Prime Minister now retired from politics, a wealthy merchant and friend of the President's family. Saeb Salam then tendered his resignation, which was accepted. Meanwhile the President's faithful henchmen had managed to obtain the signatures of fifty-eight Deputies to a declaration of confidence in the President. In view of what occurred afterwards, this astonishing number can only be explained by the conclusion that none of those who signed were willing to declare openly against a President in office, whatever their attitude might be to him once he became a private citizen.

11. Encouraged by this act of faith, Hussein Aweini started his consultations and succeeded in finding six stalwarts to keep the bridge with him, but the question at once arose what would happen on the morrow. The Sunni Deputies of Tripoli and Beirut

were united in their determination to force the issue, and it was they who controlled the rabble in the streets of the coastal towns. Moreover, they had the powerful backing of the Druze tribal leader Kamal Jumblatt. An extension of the strike, accompanied by wide-spread disorders seemed only too likely. In the last resort could the army be relied upon to maintain public order? This was the question Hussein Aweini put to the President of the Republic, and the latter to the Commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces, General Fouad Chehab. The General at once consulted the Emir Farid Chehab, Director-General of Public Security, only to find the latter's views tallied with his own. The army could not be trusted to fire upon the mob. On being so informed in the presence of the President, Hussein Aweini made a gesture of despair and the President, in a business-like manner, said that there seemed nothing for it but to resign. Taking pen and paper he at once wrote out a letter of resignation in his own hand, but before delivering it signed two decrees, one accepting the resignation of Saeb Salam and the other appointing General Fouad Chehab as Prime Minister, together with Nazim Akkari and Basil Trad as co-Ministers. Contrary to reports appearing in the press at the time, the General was not entrusted with the office of President of the Republic *ad interim*; but according to article 62 of the Constitution, the "Executive Power" is exercised in such circumstances by the Council of Ministers.

12. The resignation was signed at 2.30 a.m. on Thursday, 18th September, and became effective immediately though it was not announced until 6 a.m. As the news spread the strike petered out of its own accord. There were no spontaneous public rejoicings but an atmosphere of *détente* prevailed, and all thoughts were immediately turned towards the two questions of who should be the next President and how and when he should be elected. To calm fears increasingly voiced in Christian circles in recent days that the issue was in reality the age-old Christian-Moslem one, and that Sunni unity was but the first step towards a revision of the so-called *pacte national* (whereby the President of the Republic is by convention a Maronite, the Speaker and Prime Minister Shiite and Sunni Moslems, and the Cabinet a fixed pattern on a religious community/basis) and the election of a Moslem as President of the Republic, Saeb Salam, Sami Solh, Abdullah Yafi and other

leaders of the Sunni community at once published a statement in the press to the effect that they had no wish to disturb the existing convention, and desired to see a Maronite elected as President of the Republic. This was received with relief, and was generally accepted. The most fancied candidates from the first were Camille Chamoun and Hamid Frangieh, the former popularly regarded as the British choice and the latter the French. Both, however, were active members of Parliament, representing particular political *blocs*, and if there was a lesson to be learned from the crisis it was that the will of the people had prevailed over the heads of the Deputies, and thus over Parliament itself. There was thus a demand, which the Communist-tainted National Congress was quick to foster, that the election of the new President should be delayed until a new Chamber had been elected, and both the Constitution and electoral law reformed. This would naturally have meant a continuation of the state of uncertainty, amid rising tension, over many months. Fortunately wiser counsels prevailed, and it was ruled that the Constitution required the election of the new President to take place forthwith. Canvassing thereupon began with great intensity. To avoid the dilemma presented by the two candidates already mentioned, many eyes were turned for a time upon Alfred Naccache, who is admittedly an honest man though a colourless figure, and who was President of the Republic during the mandate. He therefore suffers from the disadvantage of being regarded as a French puppet, and indeed it was thought in some quarters, perhaps with some justice, that the French were supporting his candidature as a man likely to encounter less opposition than either of the other two, and as a useful half-way house to the eventual succession of Hamid Frangieh, for whom they have long cherished hopes as a future President of the Republic.

13. But even in the midst of the Opposition triumph the former President, though knocked and counted out, refused to lie down. By ceaseless activity he tried to spread the thesis that he himself had been a most valuable asset to the Lebanon and that, even if he himself could not be re-elected, it was essential for the safety of the State and for the avoidance of conflict between Moslem and Christian that someone of his own political colour should be chosen. (His unsolicited advice on the theme of an outside danger to the country and the need for a reaffirmation of the

Tripartite Declaration of May 1950, as reported in my telegram No. 552, was, I am sure, inspired by some such motives as these.) Nor was he without supporters in whom the habit of obedience died hard, apart from their knowledge of past favours and their hope of favours to come. This group first canvassed the name of Dr. Elias Khoury, a former Minister of no distinction or achievement. When this was clearly out of the question they swung to Alfred Naccache. But he rapidly lost ground not only because of this unwelcome support but because his French leanings and his Jesuit connexions made him anathema to the Moslems and to the triumphant Opposition. The ex-President's supporters therefore flung their weight into the scales in favour of Hamid Frangieh.

14. The only other possible starter to whom many eyes turned was General Chehab himself. But he made no secret of his reluctance to enter politics, nor of his conviction that he was not fitted for the rôle; and by Saturday, 20th September, it was clear to all that he would not stand. The field was thus left open to Chamoun and Frangieh and in this situation it was perhaps inevitable that Frangieh should be regarded as the favourite of the French against Chamoun, who, as a former Minister in London and for his many other connexions with us, was looked upon as the British candidate. Although I had daily meetings with my French and American colleagues in order to dispel this myth and although I enjoined the strongest neutrality on all my staff and told them to refrain from any comment or expression of opinion, it was impossible to nullify the prevailing impression. All the more so because, despite the extreme correctness of the French Minister himself in all his dealings with me, the French made little or no secret of their preference for Frangieh and their dislike for Chamoun, whom they have long chosen to regard as a British agent.

15. Over the week-end the two candidates ran neck and neck in the promises they had obtained from Deputies, though Camille Chamoun maintained a slight lead throughout. On Monday, 22nd September, a number of leading politicians, among them a former Speaker (and for a few days in 1943 President of the Republic *ad interim*), Habib Abi Shahla, and M. Henri Pharaon, grew apprehensive lest the evenly balanced opposition of Hamid Frangieh, with the support of the French connexion and the Christian hierarchy, and Chamoun, with the support

of the Moslems and the favour of most Arab States, might provoke dangerous Moslem-Christian dissension and if the fight was pushed to a finish might cause disunity in the body politic for a long time to come. They accordingly first got both candidates to agree to accept the verdict of a private pre-count the night before the election, and when this showed Camille Chamoun to be the winner, Frangieh, with great public spirit, withdrew his candidature and supported his rival. I believe that Chamoun was able to accept this offer without making any promises which would limit his political freedom of action afterwards. He was at the same time "released" from membership of the Opposition Front Socialiste et National, so that he might be regarded as the candidate of the whole country and not of a single political group.

16. The election ceremony on Tuesday, 23rd September, became therefore a mere formality and Camille Chamoun was elected President of the Lebanese Republic by 74 of the 77 Deputies—one ballot paper (presumably Chamoun's own) being left blank, one being marked by a misplaced comedian in favour of an undistinguished Moslem Opposition Deputy and one member (Sheikh Selim el Khoury, the ex-Presi-

dent's notorious brother) being absent. Hamid Frangieh spoke gracefully in favour of the new President, who then himself delivered a speech clearly intended to set the tone for his term of office, of which I will communicate the text separately. In it he made clear his determination to introduce reforms, including reform of the electoral law and to ensure that, by changes in the appurtenances of the presidential office, he himself should be no exception to the new and less ostentatious régime which he proposed to institute.

17. The new President then took the oath of office and was driven away to his summer palace at Beit ed-Din.

18. I propose in a separate despatch to send you my comments on the personalities of the old President and the new and the effect which the change of tenure is likely to have on the Lebanese political scene.

19. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives at Amman, Bagdad, Cairo, Damascus, Jedda, Paris, Tel Aviv and Washington and to the Head of the British Middle East Office at Fayid.

I have, &c.

E. A. CHAPMAN-ANDREWS.

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No. 9

POLITICAL SITUATION

Mr. Chapman-Andrews to Mr. Eden. (Received 30th September)

(No. 198. Confidential) *Beirut,*
Sir, *24th September, 1952.*

In my despatch No. 197 I described the events leading up to the resignation of Sheikh Bechara el Khoury as President of the Lebanese Republic and his replacement by M. Camille Chamoun.

2. The far from voluntary retirement from the scene of the former President indicates that some change in the course of Lebanese politics is inevitable and marks a convenient occasion to take note of the present situation and the situation which is likely to develop in the light of the careers and characters of the two men mainly concerned.

3. Sheikh Bechara el Khoury is some 63 years old. He comes of a good family in the Mount Lebanon district and, although at one time an able and successful lawyer, his interests and energies have for over twenty years been concentrated on local politics. His political rivalries led him into

direct opposition to the politicians grouped round the late Emile Eddé. After the Franco-Lebanese clash in 1943, he was the obvious man to become President of the Republic under British auspices.

4. Gratitude for this support, not perhaps unmingled with fear of offending a country with power to do him harm, have kept him friendly to Great Britain during his term of office. It has usually been possible to obtain what we wanted by a direct approach to him provided this did not require the Lebanon to take the lead in a different direction from that which the other Arab States wanted to follow. No Lebanese President could afford to differ sharply and openly from his Moslem neighbours and Bechara el Khoury was certainly not the man to try. In the last months, however, such influence as Britain has been able to bring to bear through the President of the Republic has undoubtedly been weakened by the popular

tendency fostered by certain Opposition elements, notably the "Socialist" Druze chieftain Kamal Jumblatt, to associate us with the origins of an increasingly unpopular régime.

5. For the late President was above all a political manipulator who believed that every problem could be solved by adroit political manoeuvres. In his anxiety to gain immediate advantage over his political opponents he was apt to lose sight both of the wider issues of policy and of his own long-term interests. He was not a strong man. He always preferred the indirect to the direct approach but, while he was always principally swayed either by avarice or by fear, he was skilful in the execution of his political tactics almost to the end. His one fatal weakness, however, was his inability to say "no" to the political, financial or social ambitions of any of his family. Moreover, he did not welcome unpalatable advice and, though to me he always displayed an accurate knowledge of the criticism directed against him, he underrated its strength and thus always made inevitable concessions too late to be of use to improve his position.

6. He was in short a village politician who thought he could safely amuse himself at outwitting his neighbours without any fear that his actions would have wider repercussions. But a Head of State cannot behave in this way, and the Lebanese political scene soon came to resemble a family farm which was gradually swallowing up the neighbour's fields and on which even the hired labourers were growing fat at the expense of the rest of the community which, not unnaturally, grew restive. The beneficiaries of the régime were either unwilling to let go the sources of so much profit to themselves or were unable to realise that any other scheme of things was possible. The President himself thought that he could stem the tide by further agile political capers, and this blind self-confidence was to prove his undoing.

7. His successor, who is 53 years of age and also a lawyer, although a less successful one, has come to power on the wave of a movement led by the self-styled Socialist and National Front. The movement had two avowed objectives, the removal of the former President and his hangers-on and the reform of the numerous abuses prevalent in Lebanese political life. Although M. Chamoun has been one of the accepted leaders of this movement I am sure that he would not call himself a Socialist. He has,

it is true, been much influenced by the knowledge and experience acquired during his appointment as Minister at London from 1944 to 1947, but this shows itself in a respect for honest administration, a realisation that world-wide social change is inevitable and can evolve peacefully and in a broader understanding of the world and its ways than is possessed by many of his compatriots. Moreover, Mme. Camille Chamoun, a charming lady though somewhat retiring, had an English mother and English education so she speaks our language as one of ourselves. She has seen to it that her two sons do the same and the elder son is in fact now at school in England.

8. It can be expected, then, that the new President will seek to introduce reforms not only in political institutions such as the existing electoral system with its mainly feudal basis, but also in the interpretation given to these institutions. The great question is whether, with all his honesty and good intentions, he has the strength of character to stand up against those who have long held traditional power in the State and to impose upon them reforms which will not be to their liking and which will cut away much of that power. If, in the first stages of his term of office, he can take advantage of the wave of popular feeling which has swept him into power and gather round him a good team of strong-minded honest administrators, he may succeed, particularly as he is believed to have come into power free from any promises or commitments to individual political leaders. On the other hand, lacking the subtlety of his predecessor, he may recoil from head-on collisions with the regional and communal leaders and may prefer to achieve only slight modifications of the formula on which the country has previously been governed. If so, I am afraid that those, who like Kamal Jumblatt have been more extreme in opposition than M. Chamoun, may continue to clamour for swift and far-reaching changes, and the risk of violent clashes will thereby increase.

9. In foreign policy the new President comes to power as a declared friend of the Arabs, less inclined perhaps than some to stress the Lebanese connexions with the Western world. It is possible, therefore, that the Lebanese Government will now be less willing than its predecessors to differ from its neighbours either in regional affairs or at the United Nations. Nevertheless, as I have said, M. Chamoun has acquired a fairly cosmopolitan outlook and has genuine respect and friendship for Britain. I am

sure that in Arab Councils his voice will always be raised in favour of moderation even though he is unlikely to wish to take the lead in new lines of action. Despite his recent association with men of pronounced Left-wing views, and despite the fact that out of sheer ignorance he signed the first Peace Appeal, I do not think it likely that under Camille Chamoun the Lebanese Government will weaken in the readiness it has always shown in recent times to resist Communist infiltration.

10. I realise that it is too early, writing before the new President has even formed his first Government, to attempt to prophesy

on all these matters, and in particular it is impossible to foresee how the office itself will affect its holder. It may reinforce his resolution or it may weaken his desire for change, but in the main I think we have reason to be satisfied that a President has been elected of obvious good intentions and of proved goodwill to ourselves.

11. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives at Amman, Bagdad, Cairo, Damascus, Jedda, Tel Aviv and to the Head of the British Middle East Office at Fayid.

I have, &c.

E. A. CHAPMAN-ANDREWS.

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No. 10

PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS AS HER MAJESTY'S
AMBASSADOR

Mr. Chapman-Andrews to Mr. Eden. (Received 24th October)

(No. 222)

Beirut.

Sir,

15th October, 1952.

I have the honour to report that I presented my Letters of Credence as Ambassador to the President of the Lebanese Republic this morning. My American and French colleagues followed me at intervals of one hour. Uniform was not worn, but apart from that the usual ceremonial was observed. I was escorted from my residence to the Presidency by an emissary of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and on arrival received a full military salute, the Presidential Guard playing "God Save The Queen." I was invited to inspect the guard of honour consisting of a company of the presidential body guard drawn up in the street beside the main gate. After being received at the door I inspected the guard accompanied by the President's aide-de-camp. At the door I was greeted by Georges Bey Haimari, O.B.E., the President's chef de cabinet by whom I was conducted to the President, who was supported by his Minister for Foreign Affairs. There was no allocution but, speaking in English, I said that I had been commanded to present Letters accrediting me as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary. The President in reply, speaking also in English, said that he was glad to

welcome me in my new capacity and wished me every success in my mission.

2. With the President's permission I then presented to His Excellency the six members of my staff who had accompanied me. Champagne was served and the President gave us the toast of Her Majesty The Queen to which I responded with the health of His Excellency the President.

3. In the course of the ten minutes' conversation that followed, the President, speaking in Arabic, said that it was an especial pleasure for him to welcome an Ambassador from Great Britain, for every Lebanese understood the obligation his country was under to Britain for the assistance rendered in the achievement of the independence of the Lebanon in 1943. He was glad now, as Head of the Lebanese State, to be in a position to express to me his feelings of gratitude and assurance that he would do what lay in his power to make my mission here a happy and successful one. I briefly returned thanks in suitable terms.

4. On my departure from the Presidency, the Lebanese National Anthem was played and I was saluted by the Guard with military honours.

I have, &c.

E. A. CHAPMAN-ANDREWS.

LEBANON: HEADS OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

Mr. Chapman-Andrews to Mr. Eden. (Received 7th October)

(No. 196. Confidential) *Beirut,*
Sir, *19th September, 1952.*

I have the honour to transmit herewith my annual report on Heads of Foreign Missions accredited to the Lebanon.

2. I am sending copies of this despatch with enclosure to Her Majesty's Representatives at Cairo, Bagdad, Amman and Damascus and to the Head of the British Middle East Office at Fayid.

I have, &c.

E. A. CHAPMAN-ANDREWS.

Enclosure in No. 11

(Passages marked with an asterisk are reproduced from previous reports)

Argentina
(Vacant.)

Belgium
M. Fernand Seynaeve, Minister (13th August, 1952).

So far, we have merely exchanged first calls; but he seems a friendly little man of wide experience outside the Middle East, mostly consular.

Brazil
M. Carlos Martins Thompson-Flores, Minister (10th August, 1948).

Also accredited to Syria.
An agreeable colleague whose work is mainly consular. His wife is handsome and affable. She speaks French. The Minister also speaks a little English. They live next door and are good neighbours.

Chile
(Vacant.)
Former minister left on "long leave," September 1952, but is not in fact coming back.

Colombia
Dr. Rodolfo Garcia Garcia, Minister (14th June, 1949).
Quite an agreeable little man with a hypochondriacal wife.

Czechoslovakia
M. Karel Stanek, Chargé d'Affaires, *ad. l.* (10th November, 1945).
Also accredited to Syria.

*A man of paternal and benign appearance, though he is said to be an ardent exponent of communism and works in the closest touch with the Russians. He knows the country and conditions well, having been here nearly six years. He has a wife but she does not appear in public. (Written in 1951.)

Egypt
Mohamed Wagih Rustom Bey, Minister (25th January, 1949.)

An agreeable man of rubicund appearance and a genial manner. He is sensible, moderate and friendly. He served for a short period in 1945 as counsellor in London and was later an Under-Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Speaks

French and Spanish well; also quite good English. His wife speaks French and English.

France
M. Georges Balay, Minister (7th April, 1952).
A well-groomed, almost dapper little man, unmarried. Can speak English and knows from personal acquaintance something of places and people in the United Kingdom. Is friendly, reasonable and glad to co-operate. More detached in his attitude than most Frenchmen in this country and knows his diplomatic trade well, but does not get on very well with the Lebanese, perhaps because of his slightly superior air towards them and a gift for implying in conversation that a plebiscite would restore the mandate.

Greece
M. Constantin Himarios, Chargé d'Affaires (24th September, 1952).
Also accredited to Syria, Iraq and Jordan.
Both he and his wife speak English and are very friendly, though professionally correct, even punctilious. Inclined for political reasons only to be a slightly aggressive Hellenist in Orthodox Church matters and, for the same reasons, an anti-Papist.

Holy See
Mgr. Giuseppe Beltrami, Nuncio (2nd December, 1950).
A dignified ecclesiastic of the old school with polished manners. Anxious to be friendly and, having, from his own account, narrowly escaped being lynched during anti-clerical riots in South America, is very sensitive to "confessional" differences among the Lebanese and, like all Catholics including Maronites in this country, fearful of the further growth of the Moslem element in the population.

Iraq
M. Ibrahim Khodeiri, Minister (21st March, 1950).
*Was for many years a civil servant before taking to diplomacy, though was Iraqi Consul (at Kermanshah) twenty years ago. A very friendly and co-operative colleague. He has a quiet dignity and is gradually building up a position for himself. Speaks English fluently—his wife less so. (Written in 1951.) Favours Iraqi union with Jordan and blames Britain for not encouraging Nuri to achieve it.

Italy
Signor Vittorio Castellani Pastoris, Minister (18th February, 1950).
*Rather a colourless but kindly and affable personality, with a wife to match. He knows this part of the world well, having in the past been consul at Damascus and later a member of the Italian Armistice Commission in Syria. He is well informed and is a pleasant and courteous colleague. (Written in 1951.)

Jordan
Dr. Jamel Bey Toukan, Minister (12th October, 1950).
*A Palestinian, previously Mutessarif of Jerusalem and a senior official in the former British Palestine administration. Speaks excellent English and a most affable and friendly colleague. He seeks our co-operation in all matters where we have common interests. (Written in 1951.) His wife is shy, gentle and in ill-health and only attends receptions when she has to. Favours Hashemite unity and inclined to blame Britain for not encompassing it,

Mexico
M. José C. Valadés, Minister (6th September, 1952).

Netherlands
M. Willem Cnoop Koopmans, Minister (3rd December, 1951).
Also accredited to Cairo.
Was here for only a few months pending settlement of the wording of his credentials for Egypt. Both he and his wife are said to have been divorced persons previous to their marriage. Both speak English well and are most friendly.

Perin
M. Aboul-Ghassem Pourevally, Minister (17th December, 1949).
A rather unprepossessing man with a large blonde German wife. Afraid to manifest the friendly disposition towards us noted by my predecessor. He speaks good French.

Peru
M. Jorge Bailey-Lembcke, Minister (8th May, 1951).
*A middle-aged bachelor with no work to do. He speaks excellent English and French and is out to enjoy the social pleasures of Beirut. (Written in 1951.)

Poland ("London Committee")
M. Zigmunt Zawadowski, Minister (17th August, 1944).
Until the enforced dissolution, in July 1945, of the Government which he claims to represent, M. Zawadowski enjoyed a good position here. Since then he has maintained a brave front in the face of an increasingly difficult position due mostly to lack of funds, not to mention the embarrassing presence of Soviet and satellite colleagues in the Diplomatic Corps. Is particularly well informed about the political situation here and about the private lives of Communist representatives both here and in neighbouring countries. Always ready to put his knowledge and information at our disposal, and generous in his expressions of gratitude for British help to former members of the Polish Brigade, who for one reason or another, mostly illness, remain in this country. Visits London regularly once a year. Has a wife who lives mostly in Paris, and a daughter who sometimes comes to stay here.

Saudi Arabia
Saïd Bey el Rashush, Chargé d'Affaires (11th December, 1946).
A Damascene, formerly in Bagdad. Is always friendly and generally speaking co-operative. Somewhat overshadowed by the fact that the Saudi Arabian Minister in Damascus (Sheikh Abdul Aziz Ibn Saïd), an ancient and sick man, who speaks no European language, comes over to Beirut to represent Saudi Arabia at the more important official occasions.

Soviet Union
M. V. A. Beliaev, Minister (16th March, 1951).
Also accredited to Syria.
Young in appearance, an engineer originally, but still and formal, rarely smiling, with a young and well-dressed wife. Speaks French. Always prepared to engage in conversation if approached, but is usually disinclined to take the first step.

Spain
Don Joaquín del Castillo y Caballero, Marqués de Castro-Torres, Minister (12th May, 1949).
Also accredited to Syria.
An affable and cultured man, a career diplomatist who does not expect to have very much to do here

and looks forward to the shooting season in Syria. During the Spanish Republican régime, he was removed from the London Embassy to be Consul at Newcastle-on-Tyne and is well disposed towards us. He speaks French and some English. His wife is a very charming lady, and they are an asset to our rather dull Diplomatic Corps. Most of their eight children are with them here.

Switzerland
Dr. Franz Kappeler, Minister (1st March, 1950).
Also accredited to Syria.
Spent some years as Counsellor in Berlin during the war. A quiet but charming person, he and his wife are always friendly.

Turkey
M. Celal Osman Abacioglu, Minister (3rd May, 1945).
(Left September 1952.)

United States
Mr. Harold B. Minor, Minister (9th October, 1951).
Having previously served for some years in Tehran, Athens and Jerusalem in both consular and diplomatic posts, has sufficient knowledge of the Middle East to treat its problems and ourselves with respect. Genuinely keen on co-operating with us and the French but finds the latter very difficult. Starry-eyed at times but at others critical of United States policy and inclined to advocate hard measures. Perhaps a little impatient. Cannot understand why Point IV Aid and the rest have not automatically installed him at the Lebanese Government's right hand. No political finesse but a very agreeable and easy colleague, with a rather retiring but friendly consort and three children.

Venezuela
Dr. Ramón Hernandez Ron, Minister (3rd July, 1952).
An exchange of first visits reveals an astute but friendly colleague.

Yugoslavia
M. Mihajlo Javorski, Minister (3rd December, 1951).
Also accredited to Syria.
A lean young man and friendly, with wife to match. Both struggling to learn English. Was a combatant partisan captured by the Germans and sentenced to death but joined in a planned mass prison break concerted with an R.A.F. bombing attack. If he is a Communist it is not noticeable.

Ministers accredited to the Lebanon but resident elsewhere

Afghanistan
Abdul Samad Khan (13th August, 1952).
Bagdad.

Austria
M. Robert Friedinger-Pranter (6th December, 1951).
Cairo.

Cuba
Señor Luis P. de Almagro y Elizaga (24th January, 1952).
Cairo.

Norway
M. Francis Irgens (15th November, 1948).
Cairo.

Pakistan
Dr. Mahmood Hasan (8th May, 1952).
Damascus.

Saudi Arabia
Sheikh Abdul Aziz Ben Zeid (16th February, 1946).
Damascus.

Sweden
Count Gustaf Weidel (27th March, 1952).
Cairo.